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TAGS: MARR MOPS PREL LE UP

SUBJECT: UKRAINE: POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNIFIL FACE
TIMELINE AND AUTHORIZATION OBSTACLES

REF: STATE 134133

Classified By: Charge a.i., reason 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) Summary. The Government of Ukraine (GOU) is actively considering what contribution Ukraine might offer to the expanded UNIFIL mission and has conducted consultations in New York with UN Assistant Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations Annabi but faces an August 17 deadline from UN PKO to provide an answer, deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Kostenko told Charge August 16. GOU initial thinking has focused on transport and logistical components. However, because of the current August vacation break and a multi-step process for authorizing and initiating any military unit deployment overseas, including Presidential and parliamentary approval and the need for unit preparation and training, it is unlikely such an immediate decision will be forthcoming in the next 24 hours to meet UN PKO's timeline.

¶2. (C) Comment: The Ukrainian MFA is more forward leaning in attempting to make a serious offer to the UN solicitation than several other key GOU components. The legacy of the UN having curtailed Ukraine's UNIFIL contingent in 2005 and canceled a planned Ukrainian deployment to the Golan Heights mission after an audit found evidence of corruption by several Ukrainian contingent commanders sent to UNIFIL in 2004, combined with what some in the GOU feel was UN SYG Kofi Annan's rude treatment of President Yushchenko when Yushchenko raised the issue in late 2005, may color Ukrainian consideration of the force request; we do not know whether it might affect UN PKO consideration of any Ukrainian offer to return to UNIFIL. We have urged the GOU to consider taking advantage of this opportunity to rejoin UNIFIL, put the bitterness of the 2005 experience behind them, and move forward. End Summary and Comment.

A Ukrainian contribution to UNIFIL?

¶3. (SBU) Charge delivered ref A's request for contributions to the enhanced UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) to deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Kostenko and Ambassador-at-large for the Middle East Oleksiy Rybak August 16, following a series of previous discussions starting July 28 by EUR DAS Kramer, Ambassador, and Charge with Foreign Minister Tarasyuk, Acting Foreign Minister Maysmekul, Deputy FM Veselovsky, Defense Minister Hrytsenko, and Acting Defense Minister Polyakov.

¶4. (SBU) DFM Kostenko said that the GOU felt that it was very important for Ukraine to be involved in the international effort to stabilize the situation in Lebanon; the MFA had issued a statement immediately after UN Security Council Resolution 1701 passed supporting the resolution and the

expanded UNIFIL mission. The Ukrainian DCM at their UN mission in New York had discussed force needs with UN ASG Hedi Annabi August 15; the real challenge was that UN PKO demanded a firm answer from Ukraine by August 17 at the latest, combined with a readiness to commit to a field deployment in the next 10-15 days.

15. (SBU) Acting FM Khandohiy and acting Defense Minister Polyakov had discussed theoretical Ukrainian contributions early August 16, said Kostenko. These included: an airmobile battalion with rotary wing (helicopter) capability; engineers; military police; and logistical support. There were two significant problems, however: deployment preparation time--the MoD said that the General Staff would need two-three months to prepare units for deployment; and the authorization process for deployments.

Authorizing deployments not simple, especially in August

16. (C) DFM Kostenko expressed some frustration that some GOU colleagues in the MOD and Presidential Secretariat had been slow to react to the MFA's active press on the issue of a potential UNIFIL contribution, which FM Tarasyuk initiated the week of July 31 in the wake of EUR DAS Kramer's July 28 visit to Kyiv. On the one hand, the GOU would like to participate and resume operations in Lebanon. On the other, Ukrainian bureaucratic realities work against a quick response in August: the Rada is out of session until September 5; President Yushchenko is in Crimea on his annual vacation; and the military has its prep time cycle built around solicitation for volunteers to deploy.

17. (SBU) Ukraine's constitutionally-mandated decision and

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authorization processes for an overseas military deployment has four stages, most recently described by Defense Minister Hrytsenko on an August 15 TV program about NATO aired by Channel 5. The General Staff, MOD, and MFA first coordinate details of a possible deployment; the National Security and Defense Council in executive session (chaired by the President) then would meet to discuss and approve the plan; the President then must sign an authorizing decree (ukaz); and finally the Rada (parliament) must pass an authorizing resolution.

18. (C) The MFA has brainstormed on possible workarounds. DFM Veselovsky told DAS Kramer July 28 that personnel deployments, as opposed to full unit deployments, did not need a Rada authorizing resolution, only a Presidential decree (note: this is the mechanism under which up to 50 Ukrainian staff officers currently work in Iraq), and a personnel deployment should be possible within a month. Kostenko asked whether the UNIFIL mandate under UNSCR 1701 had changed from UNIFIL's previous mandate; if the mandates were close enough, unit deployments might be possible under the previous Rada resolution. Kostenko noted to Charge that the UN PKO tight deadline and the Ukrainian military pre-deployment prep time appeared ultimately incompatible.

Bitter taste from UN action in 2005 lingers

19. (C) Several conversations with Acting Defense Minister Leonid Polyakov between August 10 and 15 revealed lingering resentment of the way the UN curtailed the Ukrainian UNIFIL deployment in 2005 and canceled the expected Ukrainian deployment to the mission on the Golan Heights after a mid-2005 audit uncovered evidence of corruption (skimming/reselling fuel allotments) on the part of three Ukrainian force commanders deployed to UNIFIL in 2004, prior to the Orange Revolution. From the Ukrainian perspective, the audit--which they feel was triggered by a tip-off by someone working for the Russians intending to cause embarrassment to President Yushchenko and Ukraine in the

aftermath of the Orange Revolution--uncovered roughly \$10,000 in inappropriate actions over three months, but not enough evidence for Ukrainian authorities to pursue prosecution.

¶10. (C) Notwithstanding Yushchenko and Defense Minister Hrytsenko's pledges to attack corruption--Hrytsenko was the most active minister in the new "orange" government which came into office in 2005, sacking several dozen generals and civilian ministry officials involved in corruption--Polyakov claimed that UN SYG Annan had rudely dismissed Yushchenko's personal plea in late 2005 to allow at least the Golan Heights mission to go forward, suggesting Yushchenko fight corruption in Ukraine rather than worrying about deployments.

Polyakov suggested that this negative experience continued to color the General Staff's attitude to rejoining UNIFIL and might affect the attitude of Yushchenko and the Presidential Secretariat. He personally favored an increased Ukrainian

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deployment to Kosovo which could allow a country with troops deployed there to reallocate to UNIFIL, but he said he would work with the MFA to explore possibilities vis-a-vis UNIFIL.

¶11. (U) Visit Embassy Kiev's classified website at:

www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev.

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